

U. S. Drug Reports Differ

By MICHAEL SATCHELL
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While secret intelligence reports over the past 18 months have presented a gloomy assessment of America's worldwide efforts to hamper international narcotics trafficking, the White House and the Justice Department have carefully fostered the opposite image — that the government was making significant gains in the fight against opium, heroin and cocaine smuggling.

In speeches and press releases, officials heralded Turkey's agreement to halt opium poppy production, the increased cooperation with foreign governments and record seizures of narcotics as hard evidence that the battle was well on its way to being won.

Dr. Jerome Jaffe, special consultant to the president on narcotics, and John E. Ingersoll, head of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, called them "major breakthroughs" and "milestones in the cooperative effort with foreign governments."

Thursday, the government released a report entitled "World Opium Survey, 1972" that reflected in part what intelligence networks had been saying for months.

But while the report acknowledged that things were not as rosy as pictured earlier, it still glossed over most of the facts and conclusions contained in Central Intelligence Agency and BNDD summaries that suggest the United States has only touched the tip of the world narcotics problem.

These summaries, stamped "Secret, No Foreign Dissemination," survey narcotics production and smuggling throughout Asia, Europe, Central and South America.

They detail widespread complicity by officials in several countries, suggest "extra-legal" actions the United States could consider, emphasize that the Turkish agreement will have little effect on the U.S. heroin problem, note that Vietnam war requirements have hampered the narcotics fight, and conclude that the massive effort by the United States and other nations has had little real permanent effect on the complex narcotics trade.

Among the major points in the summaries:

- Prohibiting the growth of opium poppies in Turkey is no guarantee against illegal cultivation, which has been around 100 tons a year.

- The Turkish agreement will have minimal impact on well established European smuggling pipelines that will easily switch from Turkey to Yugoslavia, Persia and Afghanistan for opium supplies.

- "Extra-legal actions such as flooding markets with harmless or aggravating heroin substitutes to destroy the trade's credibility, destruction of narcotics factories by hiring criminal or non-official elements, pay-offs of corrupted officials as an income substitute, and defoliation, are highly problematical, but should not be rejected out of hand."

- The trade cannot flourish without corrupt civil servants and police in key positions. In the "Bulgarian Customs Game" for example, government officials sell to French traffickers opium that Bulgarian customs officials have confiscated from smugglers. The smugglers often pay small fines and can even buy back their own narcotics seized earlier.

- Despite increased narcotics seizures, no critical shortage has been observed on the illicit market.

- The probability of eliminating the trade in cocaine — currently the fastest growing hard narcotic used in the United States — is nil.

The CIA and BNDD intelligence summaries spell out in vivid detail the enormous problems facing the United States in trying to curtail the highly organized and immensely profitable international narcotics trade.

Illicit opium production, for example, is estimated at something between 1,200 and 1,400 tons each year. To produce enough heroin to satisfy American addicts and users, only 40 tons of opium are required.

Turkish opium was furnishing about 80 percent of the heroin destined for the United States with the remainder coming from a small amount from the Golden Triangle area of Laos-Thailand-Burma.

The CIA reports state that in Burma, the most important nation in the Golden Triangle and which produces about 460 tons of opium annually, the United States is virtually impotent in its enforcement opportunities.

"Opportunities to exert influence are extremely limited," the reports say. "Lack of U.S. leverage suggests the best hope lies with the United Nations. Burmese customs and military officials are reported in collusion with smugglers."

In neighboring Thailand, the reports state, "officials of the Royal Thai Army and Customs at the several checkpoints along the route to Bangkok are usually bribed and 'protection' fees prepaid by the smuggling syndicate or by the driver at the checkpoints."

In the Vientiane to Hong Kong pipeline, the CIA summaries report, "most of it is probably smuggled aboard military or commercial air flights including Royal Air Laos and Air Vietnam, often

by or in collusion with the crew."

In recent years, the Golden Triangle area has begun to produce finished heroin products for shipment rather than simply raw opium or morphine base from which the heroin is made.

"The technology of refining opium into heroin is no more complex than making bootleg whisky in the United States," a CIA report says, countering the popular image of complicated heroin "laboratories."

Pressure in Europe is creating shifts in smuggling patterns with West Germany emerging as a major narcotics storage and staging area with Munich, Frankfurt and Hamburg the principal centers.

The role of Bulgaria in recent years has "increased tremendously" and the Communist nation is used as safe haven from which major narcotics operations are directed.

"Sofia has been described as the new center for directing narcotics and arms trafficking between western Europe and the Near East," the reports state. "French and United Kingdom officials have also voiced their belief that Bulgarian government officials may be actively involved in selling seized Turkish narcotics to French traffickers."

As South America emerges as an important transshipment point for narcotics entering the United States, there are indications of increased production of opium poppies in some Latin countries including the Columbia-Ecuador border and Costa Rica.

Cuban exiles and Puerto Rican nationals are playing key roles in the trade and production is switching from marijuana to the more profitable cocaine and heroin.

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HENRY J. TAYLOR

Nixon's Peking Talks Jolted

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The CIA has reported to President Nixon in Peking that, as we withdraw our troops, the Red forces are moving over Southeast Asia like termites on a log. The current alarm concerns Cambodia, Thailand and Burma, all three.

Cambodia is only the size of Oklahoma but it has 6.7 million people. The President's Vietnam pull-out was threatened by 20,000 North Vietnamese in Cambodia. Our incursion into Cambodia was a spoiling action covering our rear guard in Vietnam. But since then the keystone of the Nixon policy — Vietnamization — was tested by the Vietnamese Army's protectionary assault into Cambodia. And, as a demonstration to support the hope of Vietnamization, it was tragically unpromising.

The CIA advised the President that the disintegration heightens. The Cambodian Army has only 35,000 men. Phnom Penh, the capital is cut off, of course, except for a single uncertain road, but the Reds have now finished fortifying even fabulous Angkor Wat and completely control strategic Tonle Sap, the great lake of Cambodia. Premier Lon Nol is pressed toward a cease-fire.

THAILAND BORDERS on Cambodia; it stands between Cambodia, Laos and Burma.

The Siamese (34.7 million people) call their country Muang Thai, meaning Land of the Free People.

It has always been fiercely independent. In fact, Thailand is the only nation in the entire area that never has been ruled by a foreign power.

But the CIA has notified Mr. Nixon that Thai Army Commanding Gen. Prapas Charusathien reports that his units have intercepted Red Chinese and North Vietnamese soldiers crossing into Thailand's Sisaket and Surin provinces, 250 miles northeast of Bangkok. General Charusathien has only a 141,500-man force to meet this expansion.

U. S. AMBASSADOR TO CAMBODIA Emory C. Swank, in turn, apprised of this, is urging General Charusathien to add an army of ethnic Cambodians to meet Mao Tse-tung and Chou en-lai's expansion.

Burma, about the size of Texas, has a long common border with Thailand on Burma's

Shan states. But Burma (27 million people), fabled in Kipling's verses, is as different from Thailand as day and night. The home country of vacillating, mercurial former United Nations Secretary General U Thant, Burma is one of Southeast Asia's most inaccessible and mysterious countries.

Its actual name is the Pyee-Daung-Su Myanma Nainggan-Daw Union of Burma. The country is utterly provincial, totally fatalistic and unalterable Burmese. Neutralism, which likewise mesmerizes U Thant, is a fixation and isolationism a creed.

BURMA CHIEF OF STATE Gen. Ne Win, 60, his lidded eyes as rich as jade in a face as pale as bread and a man as wily and suspicious as U Thant himself, once told me in Mandalay, "Only Buddha can help anyone." And, not surprisingly, Burma's Marxist economy approaches absolute thrombosis.

Burma has a wild, mountainous 1,200-mile frontier — a third as long as our Canadian border — with Red China. Its armed forces total 137,500 men — 6,500 of them in a completely meaningless Air Force.

The CIA reported to President Nixon in Peking that 20,000 China-armed insurgents are now battling these forces. They are in a major engagement near Lashio, close to Red China's border. And, reported the CIA, 3,000 North Vietnamese are heading into Burma-Shan state.

Ne Win incessantly travels abroad — always flamboyantly — plays golf and hobnobs with world dignitaries whenever possible and prefers the city of Mandalay where "the dawn comes up like thunder" to his capital of Rangoon. And until now Red China has adopted a restrained role toward Burma. The CIA opinion is that Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai felt that they can wait until Ne Win dies or is booted out, as he booted out predecessor U Nu, and then Red China will be sucked into Burma as in a vacuum.

The CIA message to the President changes this. Unrevealed, Cambodia, Thailand and Burma alike suddenly jolt Mr. Nixon's Peking talks and further complicate his success over there.

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C. I. A. Identifies 21 Asian Opium Refineries

By FELIX DELAUR Jr.
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 5—United States intelligence agents have identified at least 21 opium refineries in the border area of Burma, Laos, and Thailand that provide a constant flow of heroin to American troops in South Vietnam.

Operated and protected in Burma and Thailand by insurgent armies and their leaders and in Laos by elements of the Laotian armed forces, the refining and distributing have grown until white heroin rated 96 per cent pure is turning up in Pacific coast cities of the United States as well as in Saigon.

The Burma-Laos-Thailand border area, known as the "Golden Triangle," normally accounts for about 700 tons of opium annually, or about half the world's illicit production. Burma is the largest producer in the region, accounting for about 400 tons.

But a recent analysis by the Central Intelligence Agency suggests that production is expanding in the area, and there are indications that this year's output may reach 1,000 tons.

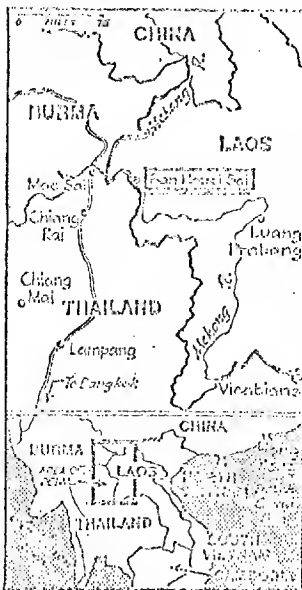
More High-Grade Heroin

C.I.A. analysis made these major points about recent trends in the illicit narcotics business in Southeast Asia:

① Refineries in Laos and Thailand that used to produce only refined opium, morphine base and No. 3, heroin for smoking are now converting most of their opium supplies to No. 4, or 96 per cent pure white heroin. The change "appears to be due to the sudden increase in demand by a large and relatively affluent market in South Vietnam."

② "Most of the narcotics buyers in the tri-border area are ethnic Chinese who pool their purchases, but no large syndicate appears to be involved. The opium, morphine base and heroin purchased in this area eventually finds its way to Bangkok, Vientiane and Luang Prabang, where additional processing may take place before delivery to Saigon, Hong Kong and other international markets."

A "considerable quantity" of raw opium and morphine base from northeast Burma and Thailand was smuggled into Bangkok and sent from there to Hong Kong in fishing trawlers from Jan. 1 to May 1, 1971.



The New York Times June 6, 1971

Opium products from the surrounding area, known as the "Golden Triangle," are said to be shipped through Ban Houei Sai.

③ "Carrying one to three tons of opium and quantities of morphine base, 'one trawler' a day moves to the vicinity of the Chinese Communist-controlled Lema Islands—15 miles from Hong Kong—where the goods are loaded into Hong Kong junks."

④ "Opium and derivatives move through Laos and are transferred from the Mekong River refineries by river craft and vehicles to Ban Houei Sai, further downstream on the Mekong in Laos, and are transported from there to Luang Prabang or Vientiane. A considerable portion of the Laotian-produced narcotics is smuggled into Saigon."

⑤ "An increased demand for No. 4 heroin also appears to be reflected in the steady rise in the price. For example, in mid-April, 1971, the price in the Tachilek [Burma] area for a kilo of No. 4 heroin was reported to be \$1,780, as compared with \$1,240 in September, 1970." A kilogram is 2.2 pounds.

⑥ "The reported increasing incidence of heroin addiction among U.S. servicemen in Vietnam and recent intelligence indicating that heroin traffic between Southeast Asia and the United States may also be increasing suggest that Southeast Asia is growing in importance as a producer of heroin."

U.S. Policy Criticized

This growth has been aided, according to one Congressional authority, by the lack—until recently—of a firm United States policy on heroin in Southeast Asia. The United States—which provides billions of dollars in military and economic foreign aid to Laos, Thailand and Cambodia—has directed its efforts intercepting the traffic at the Saigon end of the line rather than to stamping out production at the source, Representative Robert H. Steele, Republican of Connecticut, said today. Mr. Steele is the principal

author of a recent report estimating the numbers of heroin addicts among American servicemen in South Vietnam at 25,000 to 30,000.

"Vietnam unquestionably proves that the availability of narcotics breeds users," he said. "Until we dry up the sources, we haven't got a prayer of combating the problem."

While much of the opium producing and refining takes place in areas of Burma, Laos and Thailand now controlled by insurgents, narcotics enforcement officials say that a continuous flow of the drugs through government-controlled areas cannot be sustained without the involvement of corrupt officials.

The same view was expressed earlier in the week by John E. Ingersoll, director of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, in testimony before the House Select Committee on Crime.

He said that middle-level government officials and military men throughout Southeast Asia were deeply involved in the traffic in opium, the product from which morphine and heroin is refined.

Routes and Refineries Named

The analysis by the Central Intelligence Agency pinpointed major areas of cultivation, refineries and routes used in the traffic.

Northeast Burma was identified as the largest producer and processor of raw opium in the border area. The study said that Burma's 14 refineries, located in the Tachilek area, last year converted 30 tons of raw opium into refined opium, morphine base and heroin.

"The opium harvested in

Shan, Wa and Kokang area is picked by caravans that are put together by the major insurgent leaders in these areas," the C.I.A. study said. "The caravans, which can include up to 600 horses and donkeys and 300 to 400 men, take the opium on the southeasterly journey to the processing plants that lie along the Mekong River in the Tachilek-Mae Sai, Thailand-Ban Houei Sai, Laos area."

The analysis said that caravans carrying more than 16 metric tons had been reported. A metric ton is about 2,200 pounds.

7 Important Refineries

Of the 21 refineries identified in the three countries, seven were described in the report as capable of processing raw opium to the heroin stage. "The most important are located in the areas around Tachilek, Burma; Ban Houei Sai and Nam Keung in Laos, and Mae Salong in Thailand," it said.

"The best known, if not largest of these refineries is the one at Ban Houei Sai, Laos, near Ban Houei Sai, which is believed capable of processing some 100 kilos of raw opium per day," the report said.

The opium and derivatives crossing Thailand from Burma enroute to Bangkok was traced in the paper as moving out of such Northern Thai towns as Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, Lamphang and Tak "by various modes of ground and water transport."

"The opium is packed by the growers and traded to itinerant Chinese merchants who transport it to major collection points, particularly around Lashio and Ken Tung," the study said.

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